



Australian Bureau of Statistics

6602.0 - Microdata: Longitudinal Labour Force, Australia, 1982-2020

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Summary

Accessing the data

Microdata: Longitudinal Labour Force, Australia, 1982-2020 (experimental)

This dataset expands the timeseries previously provided, and is experimental in nature. The data enables in-depth analysis of the social and economic aspects of labour market engagement over time.

Accessing the data

You can use this data in:

- DataLab - analyse detailed longitudinal microdata

Compare access options to see what's right for you or [Apply for access](#).

The Labour Force Survey provides monthly statistics about the labour market participation of the population. It is conducted every month throughout Australia. See [Labour Force, Australia](#) for summary results, methodology and other information.

Data and file structure

Data and file structure

Data items include:

- Demographics, such as age, sex and country of birth
- Survey month and time in survey
- Geography
- Household and family characteristics
- Employment characteristics
- Hours worked
- Industry
- Occupation
- Skill level of job
- Educational attainment and attendance
- Underemployment and Underutilisation
- Unemployment and details of last job

- Duration of job search
- Reason not in the labour force

Use the data item list on the Downloads tab to confirm this dataset includes what you need for your research before purchasing your subscription.

The file is structured as a single level person file. Higher level characteristics, such as items related to households and families, are attributed to each person record.

The Longitudinal Labour Force (LLFS) data spans multiple time periods, so the month of the survey also acts like an additional level. Individuals can be observed for up to eight months making the data suitable for use in analysis of cross sections, pooled cross sections, short panels and longer pseudo panels.

The current edition of the LLFS covers Labour Force Survey (LFS) responses from October 1982 to April 2020. The LLFS will continue to be updated on a monthly basis, scheduled 8 days after the release of Labour Force, Australia (cat. no. 6202.0). The next release with May 2020 data is scheduled for 26 June 2020.

Using DataLab

Using DataLab

DataLab allows real time access to detailed microdata files through a portal to a secure ABS environment. Using detailed microdata in DataLab allows users to run advanced statistical analyses using recent analytical software.

For information about the data items available on the detailed microdata files, see the Data Item List in the Downloads tab.

About DataLab

Detailed microdata files in DataLab can be accessed on-site at ABS offices or in a secure virtual environment from your own computer. All unit record data remains in DataLab, and any analysis results or tables are checked by the ABS before being provided to users.

For more information, including prerequisites for DataLab access, please see the About DataLab page.

Detailed microdata test file

A test file is available as a free download in the Downloads tab.

The test file mimics the structure of the detailed microdata in that it has the same data items and allowed values. This allows users to become familiar with the data structure and prepare code/programs before applying for or beginning a DataLab session.

All data on the test file is false, created through a randomisation process and therefore cannot be used for analysis.

Counts and weights

The current edition of the Longitudinal LFS (LLFS) includes 442 monthly cross sections covering the period from October 1982 to April 2020 (Table 1). On average each cross section has close to 62,000 observations but the size of the cross sections has been closer to 50,000 since late 2009. Between July 2008 and September 2009, the sample size was temporarily reduced to be around 40,000. The size of cross sections generally declines over time reflecting improvements in sampling methodology.

Each cross section is used to produce the headline LFS statistics. The weights provided with the LLFS ensure that each cross-section reproduces the statistics found in the LFS.

Table 1: Summary of monthly cross sections^(a)

	Months	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Total
Observations	442	41,472	76,228	61,623	27,237,407

(a) Excluding the missing cross sections for May 1983, June 1983, November 1983, January 1984, September 1984, December 1984, January 1985, July 1985 and July 1986.

For more information about the file structure, see the [Data and file structure](#) page.

For more information about the weights, see the [Weighting and Benchmarks](#) section of the [Data Item List](#), available in the [Downloads](#) tab..

Unit identifiers

Every record of the file is uniquely identified by the item ABSRID. This identifier is a combination of the household identifier ABSHID and the person identifier ABSPID. All of these identifiers are used consistently across months to create longitudinal links.

Non-private dwellings and dwellings selected in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are excluded from longitudinal linking. These include hotels, motels, hostels, hospitals, religious institutions providing accommodation, educational institutions providing accommodation, prisons, boarding houses, and short-stay caravan parks. These are given a new household identifier each month in this dataset. People in non-private dwellings are more likely to be older and not in the labour force than those in private dwellings.

Family units are identified by the item FAMNUM. This identifier is not used consistently across months due to the dynamic nature of family relationships. Its purpose is to identify family units within multiple family households for the particular circumstances of each month. The identification of family units in one month may not necessarily correspond to how family units are identified in subsequent or preceding months.

For more information about the identifiers, see the [Record Identifiers](#) section of the [Data Item List](#), available in the [Downloads](#) tab.

Longitudinal analysis

The Labour Force Survey (LFS) is designed to survey the same household for eight consecutive months. However, this means that individuals can move in and out of the LLFS for a number of reasons:

- they do not complete the survey in a month,
- they are visiting the household,
- they move house permanently, or
- they were in a non-private dwelling.

While over 5.5 million individuals are observed in total, just under 1.9 million are observed for the full eight months (Table 2).

Table 2: Counts of individuals

	Number of responses		3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
	1	2							
Total	1,421,619	297,319	271,316	375,223	285,939	364,563	629,075	1,860,714	5,505,768
Visitors	139,785	17,362	5,563	2,204	1,000	580	427	348	167,629
Non-private dwellings	899,507								899,507

Some individuals are more likely to leave the LFS than others.

- Males are more likely to leave relative to females
- Younger individuals are more likely to leave relative to older individuals
- Unemployed individuals are more likely to leave relative to employed individuals or those not in the labour force
- Individuals in regional areas are more likely to leave relative to those in capital cities
- Single individuals are more likely to leave relative to married individuals
- People who were born overseas are more likely to leave than those born in Australia
- Those visiting a household are more likely to leave than those that live in the household

When linking individuals, this variability in the types of people who leave and stay in the LFS results in attrition bias overtime. It is important when looking at aggregate statistics that use linked observations to be aware of this bias and to attempt to control for it if possible. This can be done by adjusting the weights appropriately - increasing the weights for those who are more likely to leave the LFS.

It is also important to consider how the collection of the LFS has changed over time. The method of data collection has changed to allow a greater choice in how people respond, from face-to-face interviews to phone interviews to online self-completion.

About this Release

Enables in-depth analysis of the social and economic aspects of labour market engagement

over time.

History of changes

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22/05/2020 - Version 2004, Oct 1982 to Apr 2020

- Addition of months Sep 2019 to Apr 2020.
- Revisions to Weight (WEIGHT), and Population count (POPCOUNT) for the period Apr 2018 to Aug 2019 due to LFS quarterly rebenchmarking.
- Revisions to Number of responses (NUMRESP) and Response number (RESPNUM) for the period Feb 2019 to Aug 2019 to account for additional months of data.
- Updates to Decade of arrival (DECARR), Year of arrival (YRARR), Year left school (YRSCHOOL), and Year completed highest non-school qualification (YRCOMNSQ) to include the year 2020.
- Updates to First day of reference week (STRTDATE) for the period Oct 2005 to Jun 2014 to include more detailed data.
- Revisions to Labour market region of usual residence (REGNASGS) for the period Jul 2018 to Aug 2019 to include previously missing data.

06/12/2019 - Version 1908, Oct 1982 to Aug 2019

10/12/2012 - First release, Jan 2008 to Dec 2010

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